



MEDIA RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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Alcoa Fire Chief Retiring

The City of Alcoa announced today the retirement of veteran Fire Chief Larry Graves effective February 9, 2007.

Graves began his career with the City of Alcoa Fire Department June 12, 1965. He left the department in April 1966 to serve in the U.S. Army after being drafted and returned in April 1968.

When Graves joined the fire department, the City had only one fire station and six fulltime firefighters who worked 48-hour shifts with 48 hours off. Since then, the fire department has gone from responding to not only fires to providing emergency services for vehicle accidents and extraction, hazardous material incidents, and technical and confined space rescues. During his tenure, emergency calls have increased from an average of 200 per year to over 1,200 per year.

Graves earned associate degrees in criminal justice and fire science from Walter State Community College. He also completed the Municipal Specialist in Public Safety program at University of Tennessee Municipal Training Program. Graves received additional training and certifications as a Firefighter III, Fire Instructor I, First Responder in Emergency Medical Service (EMS), and Hazmat Tech. He completed class work for Preparing for and responding to Terrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction, Emergency Response to Terrorism, and an Executive Development Program. He attended the Self-Assessment and Peer Assessor Workshops from the Commission on Fire Accreditation International and has other training and certifications in all levels of fire education, firefighting, rescue, leadership and management.

In 1986, after progressing through the ranks, Graves was named as the City's first Assistant Chief/Training Officer. In 1992, Graves was promoted to chief following the retirement of Chief Clifford Freeman. Graves also performed the duties as the City's Safety Director. Under Graves' direction, the City's EMS First Responder Program was implemented in 1994. This allows the department's emergency medical technicians to provide medical assistance until an ambulance arrives.

Chief Graves was instrumental in coordinating the construction of two fire stations and the City's Public Safety Building, which houses both the City's Fire Administration and Police Departments.

Graves involvement in professional and community organizations include:

- 2000-2001- President of the Tennessee Fire Chief's Association
- Appointed Assistant to the Tennessee Commission of the Commerce and Insurance, Division of Fire Prevention
- 1999 – Chairman of the East Tennessee Regional Council of Fire Chiefs
- Member of the 1997 Class of Leadership Blount
- Member of the International Association of Fire Chiefs
- 1994 – United Way Public Service Division Chairman
- 1993 - District Sertoman of the Year
- Present Secretary of the East Tennessee Regional Council of Fire Chiefs
- Past Member of the Blount County Rescue Squad Board of Directors
- A member of the Blount County 911 Board
- Serves as an Assessment Team Member for the Commission on Fire Accreditation International
- Received the 2005 American Red Cross Firefighter of the year award
- Member of the Blount County Shrine Club working with children treated at the Shriner's Hospitals

Graves has been married to Sue Walker since 1969. Graves said, "I have made good friends that have retired and will miss the staff that I work with now in addition to all City employees."

His future plans include continuing to be involved with the fire service saying, "I will continue to be an Assessment Team Member for the Commission on Fire Accreditation International traveling across the country accrediting fire departments. "

City Manager Mark Johnson said, "The City is greatly indebted to Chief Graves for his fierce loyalty to the City and his dedication to the safety of its citizens. He has been a rock solid member of the City's management team and we will all miss his wisdom and counsel in all areas of city government."

Deputy Chief Roger Robinson will serve as interim chief until Graves replacement is named.

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